

Claim Amendments

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claim 1 (previously presented): Device for singulating overlapping flat mailings in an upright position in a path of travel comprising:

first, second, and third singulating sections disposed along the path of travel with an ensemble of conveyor belts, each of said first, second, and third singulating sections having respective conveyor belts of said ensemble of conveyor belts spaced apart from each other and above each other for transporting the mailings, and each of said first, second, and third singulating sections having, at an opposite side of the path of travel, respective retaining elements for acting on the mailings with a friction force and at a height between the conveyor belts, wherein said conveyor belts in said third singulating section are configured to have a speed of travel that is higher than the speed of travel of said conveyor belts of said second singulating section, which is disposed upstream of said third singulating section in the direction of travel, and said conveyor belts in said second singulating section are

configured to have a speed of travel that is higher than the speed of travel of said conveyor belts of said first singulating section, which is disposed upstream of the second singulating section in the direction of travel, said first singulating section being provided with a first deflection roller of said conveyor belts of said first singulating section, said second singulating section being provided with second and third deflection rollers of said conveyor belts of said second singulating section, and said third singulating section being provided with a fourth deflection roller of the conveyor belts of said third singulating section, said first and second deflection rollers being disposed at different heights along a common axis at a transition between said first and second singulating sections, and said third and fourth deflection rollers being disposed at different heights along a common axis at a transition between said second and third singulating sections.

Claim 2 (previously presented): Device in accordance with claim 1, wherein said ensemble of conveyor belts has conveyor belts for receiving the mailings and respective transferring conveyor belts, said conveyor belts receiving the mailings have a higher coefficient of friction than said respective transferring conveyor belts.

Claim 3 (previously presented): Device in accordance with claim 1, wherein behind receiving conveyor belts of the ensemble of conveyor belts in a receiving area the mailings are arranged at vacuum chambers pulling the receiving conveyor belts.

Claim 4 (previously presented): Device in accordance with claim 1, wherein at said transition between the first and second singulating sections a receiving area of the second singulating section has one more conveyor belt than a transferring area of the first singulating section, and at a transition between said second and third singulating sections a receiving area of said third singulating section has one more conveyor belt than a transferring area of said second singulating section.

Claim 5 (original): Device in accordance with claim 1, wherein each singulating section has a measuring device in a receiving area for recording a speed of the mailings.

Claim 6 (previously presented): Device in accordance with claim 5, wherein a drive motor of the conveyor belt of each of the upstream singulating sections in the direction of travel can be switched off or reduced in speed if the mailing arriving in the respective downstream singulating section has

achieved a speed of a receiving conveyor belt of said ensemble of conveyor belts, and the switch-off or reduction persists until a clearance between the mailings, specified for each singulating section, has been determined by means of a line of light barriers arranged along the path of travel.

Claim 7 (previously presented): Device in accordance with claim 3, wherein additionally a vacuum of the vacuum chamber of each singulating section upstream in the direction of travel can be switched off or reduced if the corresponding mailing arriving in a succeeding singulating section has reached a speed of a receiving conveyor belt of said ensemble of conveyor belts, and the switch-off and or reduction persists until a clearance between the mailings, specified for each singulating section, is determined by means of a line of light barriers arranged along the path of travel.

Claim 8 (original): Device in accordance with claim 1, wherein the retaining elements are secured on an immovable belt running along the length of all singulating sections.

Claim 9 (currently amended): The device according to claim 4, wherein said second singulating section is divided into an upstream receiving conveyor belt area for receiving the mailings from the first singulating section and a downstream

transferring conveyor belt area, each of said conveyor belt areas being provided with respective conveyor belts coupled by a common coupling roller, and said ~~downstream-transferring~~ upstream receiving conveyor belt area having one more conveyor belt than said ~~upstream-receiving~~ downstream transferring conveyor belt area.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The device according to claim 1, wherein said retaining elements of said first, second, or and third singulating sections alternate in height to correspond to the height of the respective deflection rollers.

Claim 11 (previously presented): A method for singulating overlapping flat mailings in an upright position in a path of travel, comprising:

providing a device having first, second, and third singulating sections disposed consecutively along the path of travel with an ensemble of conveyor belts, each of the first, second, and third singulating sections having respective conveyor belts of the ensemble of conveyor belts spaced apart from each other and above each other for transporting the mailings, and each of the first, second, and third singulating sections having, at an opposite side of the path of travel, respective

retaining elements for acting on the mailings with a friction force and at a height between the conveyor belts, the first singulating section being provided with a first deflection roller of the conveyor belts of the first singulating section, the second singulating section being provided with second and third deflection rollers of the conveyor belts of the second singulating section, and the third singulating section being provided with a fourth deflection roller of the conveyor belts of the third singulating section, the first and second deflection rollers being disposed at different heights along a common axis at a transition between the first and second singulating sections, and the third and fourth deflection rollers being disposed at different heights along a common axis at a transition between the second and third singulating sections;

driving the conveyor belts in the second singulating section with a speed of travel which is greater than the speed of travel of the conveyor belt of the first singulating section disposed upstream of the second singulating section in the direction of travel; and

driving the conveyor belts in the third singulating section with a speed of travel of which is greater than the speed of travel of the conveyor belts of the second singulating

section, which is disposed upstream of the third singulating section in the direction of travel.

Claim 12 (currently amended): The method according to claim 11, further comprising:

switching off or reducing the speed of a drive motor of the conveyor belts of the first singulating section if the mailing arriving in the second singulating section has achieved the speed of a receiving conveyor belt of the second singulating section;

maintaining the switching off or the reduction of speed until a clearance between the mailings specified for the first singulating section has been determined by a line of light barriers disposed along the path of travel;

switching off or reducing the speed of a drive motor of the conveyor belts of the second singulating section if the mailing arriving in the third singulating section has achieved the speed of a receiving conveyor belt of the third singulating section; and

maintaining the switching off or the reduction of speed until a clearance between the mailings specified for the second

singulating section has been determined by a line of light barriers disposed along the path of travel[[;]] .

Claim 13 (currently amended): The method according to claim 11, further comprising:

switching off or reducing the vacuum of a vacuum chamber of the first singulating section if the mailing arriving in the second singulating section has achieved the speed of a receiving conveyor belt of the second singulating section;

maintaining the switching off or the reduction of vacuum until a clearance between the mailings specified for the first singulating section has been determined by a line of light barriers disposed along the path of travel;

switching off or reducing the vacuum of a vacuum chamber of the second singulating section if the mailing arriving in the third singulating section has achieved the speed of a receiving conveyor belt of the third singulating section; and

maintaining the switching off or the reduction of vacuum until a clearance between the mailings specified for the second singulating section has been determined by a line of light barriers disposed along the path of travel[[;]] .